

THE MARK
OF THE EAST
AND OTHER POEMS

J. M. SYMNS



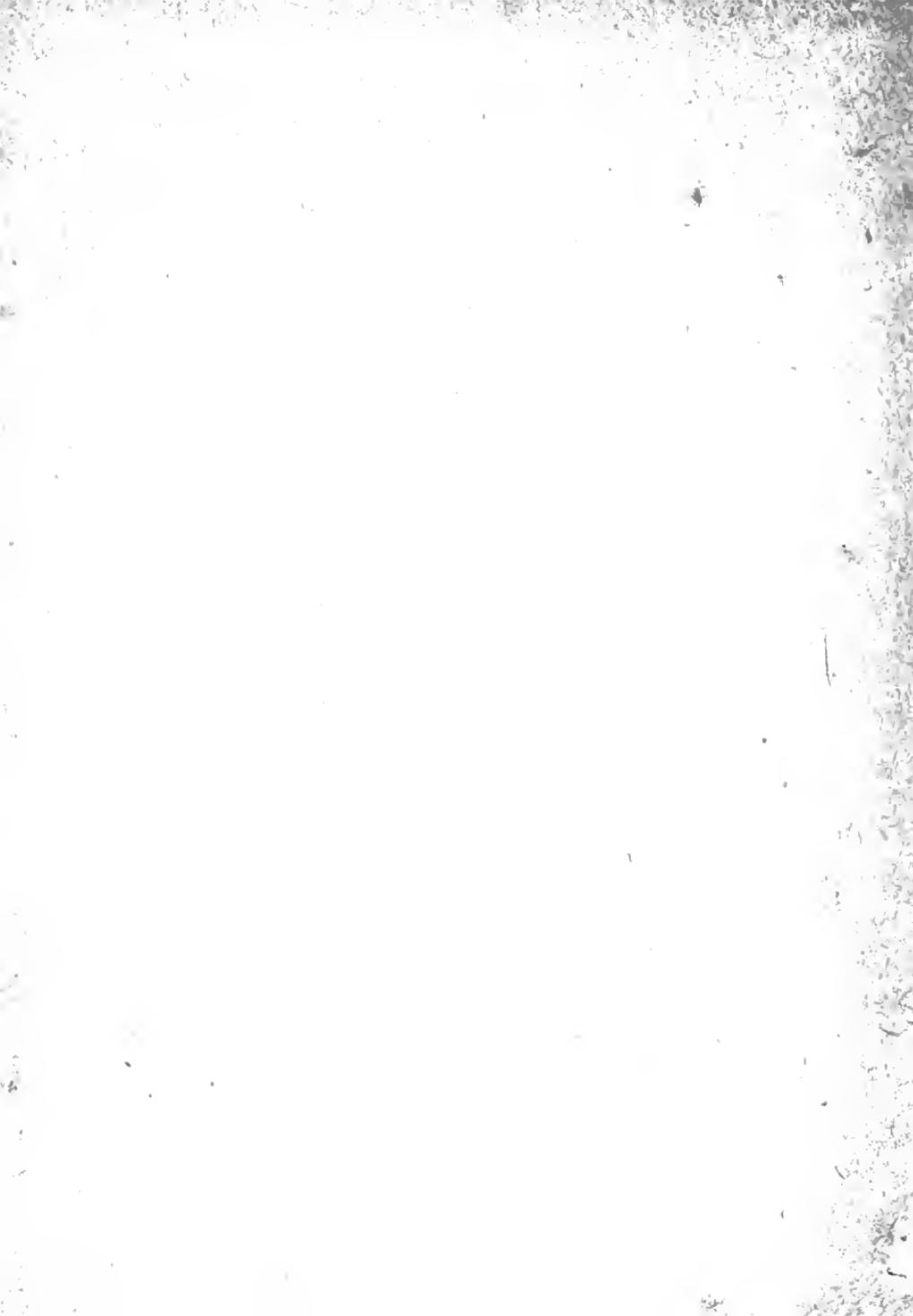
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THE MARK OF THE EAST



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AND OTHER VERSES

BY

J. M. SYMNS

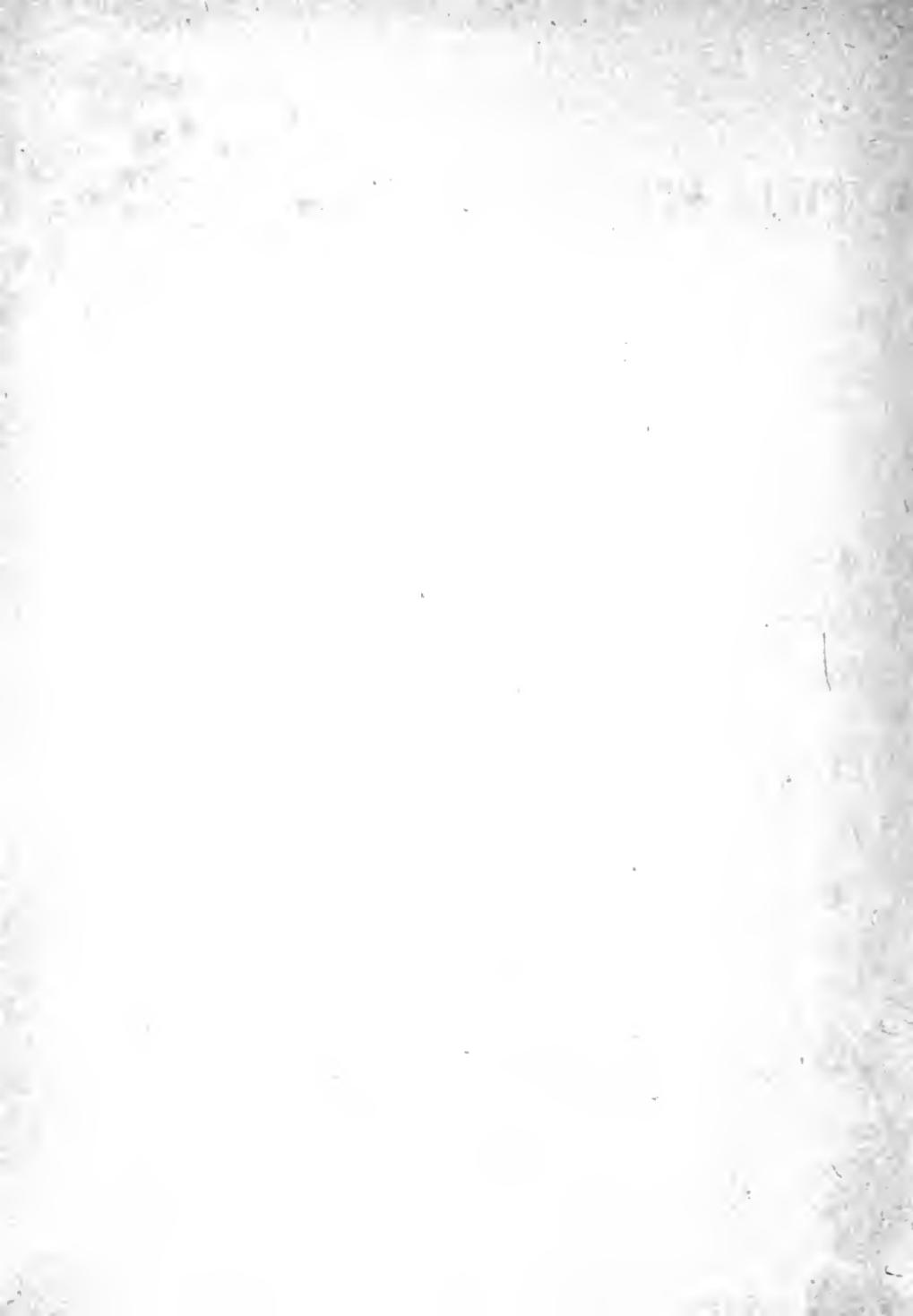
INDIAN EDUCATIONAL SERVICE

AUTHOR OF

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Of the following pieces twenty-four have appeared in *Punch*, seventeen in the *Rangoon Gazette*, and one in the *Burma Critic*. I am greatly obliged to the Managers for their courtesy in allowing me to republish, also to Mr. OWEN SEAMAN for many kindly letters of advice, and to Mr. H. S. S. PARKER for revising the proofs.

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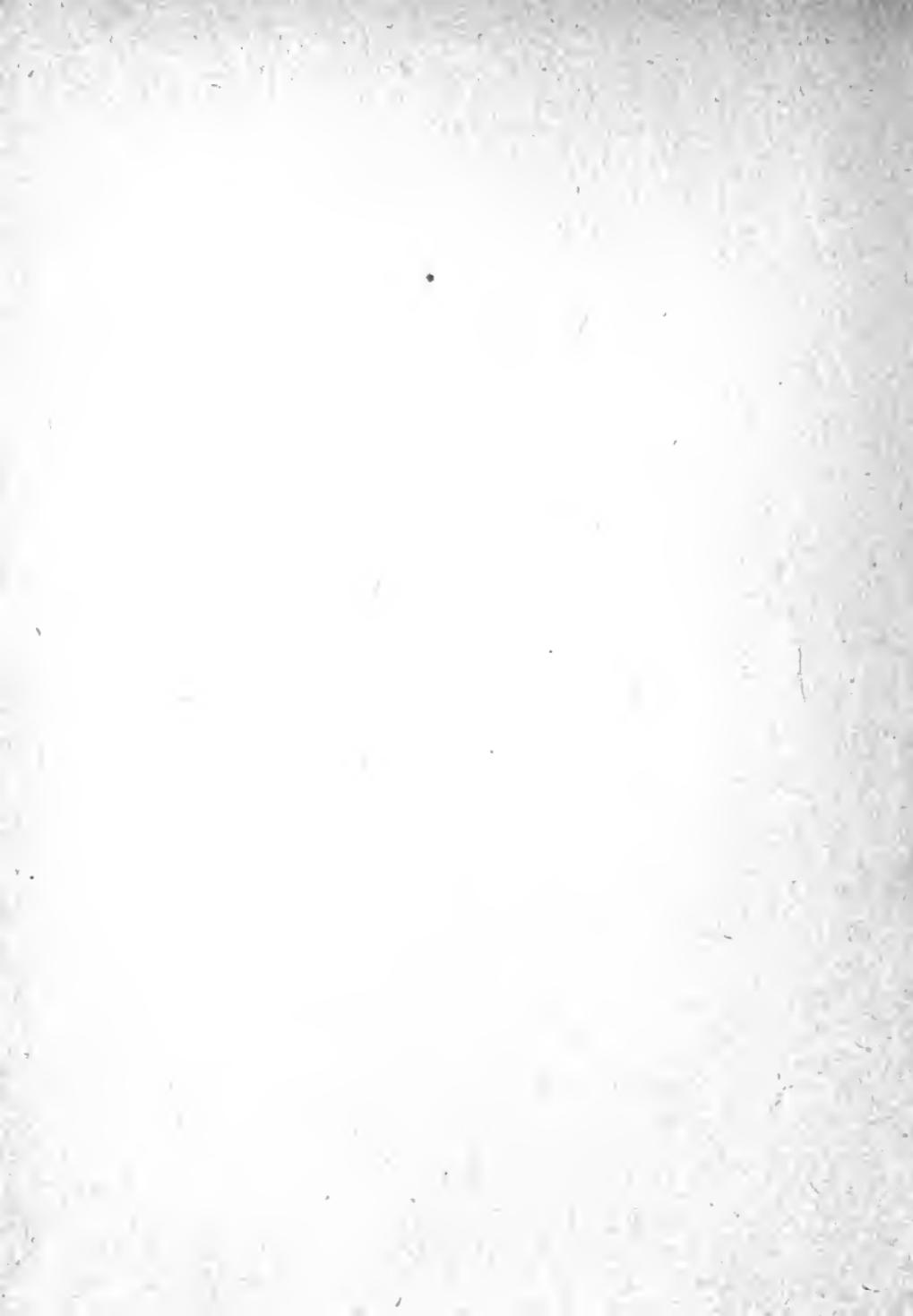
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THE MARK OF THE EAST

B



THE MARK OF THE EAST.

WHEN Gertrude sails for India
She bids her kin and kith
Inspect the bales of tropic veils,
The helmets made of pith :
The net to spread above her bed
Is viewed with anxious mien,
And eyes dilate to see the crate
Of camphor and quinine.

When Gertrude sails for India,
Her mother's feeling queer,
The Rector blows an anxious nose
And wipes away a tear :
Shall Ruth or Grace usurp the place
'Tis Gertrude's pride to hold
At Little-Budleigh-in-the-Mud-
cum-Worple-on-the-Wold ?

When Gertrude sails for India,
 The local "Dorcas" sighs
For one whose zest last autumn dress'd
 A score of pagan thighs;
In stricken tones a curate drones
 The lessons for the day,
Nor dares to view his Rector's pew
 For fear of giving way.

When Gertrude comes from India,
 She's Indian to the core,
Her gown and hair, her manners bear
 The stamp of Barrackpore;
She sits and prates of maiden plates,
 Of revels at the "Gym,"
Of leading parts and doubled hearts
 The regiment and him.

When Gertrude comes from India,
 She's found an Eastern twang,
And bores her friends with odds and ends
 Of Anglo-Indian slang;

The roof-tree shakes, the housemaid quakes
Before that torrid flow
Of "idhar ao" and "jaldi jao,"
And "asti bát karo."

When Gertrude comes from India,
The Rector's habits pall,
The startled guest is gently press'd
To cocktails in the hall ;
Her parents quail before the gale
Which swamps the old routine,
And, save in Lent, must needs consent
To dine at 8.15.

When Gertrude comes from India,
The schemes I'd lately plann'd,
They fade and die, and that is why
I loathe that selfish land,
Which drains the West of all its best
To keep an atlas red ;
Which dared to claim my only flame
And send me this instead.

THE MEM-SAHIB.

A NY morning you may meet her
Where the sunlight gilds the strand
And the curlews rise to greet her
As she gallops o'er the sand,
Riding swift, as though a wager's
In the fore-front of her mind,
With a brace of breathless majors
Close behind.

Watch her dole the daily rations,
Watch her scan the butler's book,
Watch her foil the machinations
Of a swart and bearded cook ;
Prouder than a queen, sublimer
Than a goddess, see her stand
With a Hindustani Primer
In her hand !

When the swift and welcome gloaming
Shrouds the palm-trees and the huts,
And the bullocks, slowly homing,
Loom like ghosts across the ruts ;
When the plantain (or banana)
Rocks to rest the drowsy midge,
She'll be up at the gymkhana
Playing bridge.

And it seems a little funny
That not one among us all
Ever danced the " Hugging Bunny "
Or the glad " Crustacean Crawl "
Till she came out East and taught us
Every trick of pose and gait,
Occidentalized and brought us
Up to date.

And our bungalows were gloomy,
There were bats behind the doors,
And the rooms were far too roomy
With their bare and shameless floors,

Till she burst upon our quiet
With her china and her prints,
With the reminiscent riot
Of her chintz.

Would you learn the gladness of her,
Catch the charm before it pass ?
Ask the butterflies that hover
Emerald o'er the sun-burned grass ;
Ask the paddy-birds that settle
On the crimson-flow'ring boughs,
Or the frangipanni petal
In her blouse.

And I would not have you grudge her
Any pleasure she may wrest
From the wilderness, or judge her
By the standards of the West ;
She's a "bold, designing creature"
To the folk who know her least,
But to us—the saving feature
Of the East.

MISSY BABA

HER little limbs are lizard-swift,
Her eyes are orchid blue—
Blue as the butterflies that drift
Sedately out of view.

As hard as nails from tip to toes,
She's tanned with sun and breeze,
A myriad freckles on her nose
And scratches on her knees.

And when they've brushed my little girl
And made her neat and trim,
The golden tendrils quaintly curl
About her topee's brim.

She knows the track, the hidden lair
Of things that crawl and creep,
The bull-frog's haunt, the coppice where
The flying foxes sleep.

Where streams are swift and nullahs sheer
She darts in search of fun,
Conscious that somewhere in the rear
Distracted ayahs run.

She howls—a huge chuprassi flies
To soothe her baby grief,
She laughs—and half a compound sighs
In undisguised relief.

But should you find her up a tree
With kirtle torn and soiled,
Perhaps you'd say she runs too free,
Perhaps you'd think her spoiled.

Maybe she is, maybe she's all
That's mischievous and bold,
But she has heard the homeland call—
My Burma five-year-old.

And I, who know we've got to part
When six short weeks are o'er,
Just fold her closer to my heart
And spoil her all the more.

THE DESERT OPTIMIST.

A N exile, I would fain forget
That circumstance hath put me down
Quite close to places like Tibet,
But very far from London town.

And though the outlook's rather drear
I sometimes fancy I detect
A sort of Cockney atmosphere,
A Metropolitan effect.

Behind my chair in solemn state
The bearer and khansama stand,
Swart replicas of those who wait
In Piccadilly or the Strand.

My punkah brings a grateful wind
 To cheeks climatically brown'd,
A fitful gust that calls to mind
 The draughts about the Underground.

And though they spoil my morning rest
 I like to lie awake and hark
To parrakeets whose notes suggest
 Their captive kin in Regent's Park.

About my house the pigeons roost,
 They perch upon the compound walls,
Own brothers to the friends who used
 To flap me greeting from St. Paul's.

In yellow waves the dawn-mist drives
 Across the paddy-field, and jogs
The memory of one who strives
 To reconstruct his London fogs.

And when I hear a bullock-cart
 Go rumbling 'neath its harvest truss
The echo wakens in my heart
 The music of the omnibus.

And thus it is I've learned to find
A remedy for things that irk ;
My desert fades, and with a kind
Of cinematographic jerk—

“ Urbs errat ante oculos ” ;
Then, Fortune, send me where you list,
I care not, London holds me close,
An exile, yet an optimist.

THE GURRUMPORE LINKS

THE fairway, I grant you, is shocking,
 'Tis a nightmare of villainous lies,
Of spear-grass that works through your stocking,
 Of foul and importunate flies ;
The greens are brunettes, they are branded
 With the trampling of bullock and horse,
And yet—to be thoroughly candid—
 We're proud of the Gurrumpore course.

And why ? Ask the vulture that track'd us
 Poised fearless o'er eyrie and bluff,
Ask the cobra that gaped through the cactus
 At the sound of our laugh in the rough ;
Go, stand where yon cataract crashes
 In a passion of thunder and foam,
And ask of our jubilant mashies
 If they yearn for the hazards at Home !

Though a tigress may happen to stalk me
Through the shadows of cañon and chine,
Though the yowl of her offspring may baulk me
Of holes that were morally mine,
Shall my golf be upset by a trifle,
When “a tiger (or adult or cub)
May be gently removed with a rifle”—
Rule IX of the Gurrumpore Club ?

Near the fourth there’s a lake, such as Herrick
Might have sung in some exquisite lay,
But it goes by the name of “Enteric,”
Since the fate of the foursome in May ;
And an obelisk marks where our captain,
Colonel Brown, D.S.O., C.I.E.,
Topp’d an easy approach and was trapp’d in
The ant-hills that guard number three.

It’s not a long course ; you’ll remember
The landslip just after the rains
That robbed us of half in November,
But we’re proud of the piece that remains ;
Though no golf periodicals name it,
Though St. Andrews would greet it with mirth,
From the depth of our hearts we acclaim it
“ The most difficult course on the earth.”

THE WATER-COLOUR.

I T might have helped to fill a space
 On some relation's spare-room wall ;
It might have shone in pride of place
 Upon a missionary stall,
Where Charity—that covers sin—
 Or Hospitality had shed
The laurels that you yearn to win—
 But, no ! you sent it me instead.

And, as I scan this curious view,
 It “furiously gives to think ;”
The upper half is mainly blue,
 The lower—various shades of pink ;
And none, I ween, should ever name
 The purport of these mystic tones,
Were it not printed on the frame :
 “ An Eastern Landscape—Doris Jones.”

But I, whose fate it is to know
 The drabness of a desert land,
Who look from out my bungalow
 Across infinities of sand,
Could wish that you had sought a theme
 In brae and burn, in tree and turf,
Or fixed an exile's fading dream
 Of cloud-swept down, of wind-swept surf.

For one who's seen a tropic sky
 And knows by heart its sickening hue
Must need admit it's white and dry,
 But, Doris, *never* liquid blue ;
And as for sand, the beastly stuff
 That gets into your eyes and nose,
It may be yellow, white or buff,
 But never this ethereal rose.

And yet I'm glad you didn't send
 This symbol of a maiden art
To any caustic critic-friend
 Who boasts a less romantic heart ;
For he'd have scanned it with a frown
 And placed it in a bottom-drawer,
While I—I'll hang it upside down
 And call it "Sunrise off the Nore."

AT A FANCY-DRESS DANCE.

MATRON and maid of every clime I see,
Yet never one—I care not who she be—
 Roumanian, Lett,
Daughter of Ganges, Amazon or Loire—
Shall vie with you, my dainty “Rouge et Noir,”
 My Pierrette.

Flirting a wealth of gay Alhambran hose,
Poising in arch abandonment of pose
 You pirouette,
Glad as who wears no trailing skirt to dim
The lurid splendour of a nether limb,
 My Pierrette.

May be more curious, less romantic eyes,
Shall peer beyond the subaltern’s disguise,
 The chemisette

And other lingerie we may not name,
To trace the sinews of the warrior frame,
 My Pierrette.

The stern reality, the truth that hides
A shake with laughter neath those stay-press'd sides
 I'd fain forget,
And mindful only of that final twirl
Retain the memory of my perfect girl,
 My Pierrette.

EASTERN IDYLLS.

(a) *THE ERROR OF DAPHNIS.*

LIZARDS are frisking, the breezes are voicing
Carols of joy through the tamarind leaves,
And yet, 'mid the echoes of fun and rejoicing,
Daphnis, our latest young heaven-born, grieves.

Daphnis, whose glory and pride are a garden,
Daphnis, who saw through his casement at dawn
He-goats and she-goats defiling his Arden,
Kids mid his cannas and rams on his lawn.

“Henchmen!” he shouted, and swiftly chuprassies,
Syces and durwans appeared at the word,
Pan-like they leaped through the tremulous grasses,
Breathing reproach at the odorous herd.

Hades and Hecate ! See how they worry 'em,
Chivy and chase 'em around and around,
Harry and haul 'em and finally hurry 'em
(Twenty in all) to a neighbouring pound !

Lizards are frisking, the breezes are voicing
Carols of joy through the tamarind leaves,
And yet, 'mid the echoes of fun and rejoicing,
Daphnis, our latest young heaven-born, grieves.

Daphnis was reared on ambrosia and nectar,
Daphnis was one of the brightest and best,
But gall is his portion this evening, and wreck'd are
The hopes of promotion that stirred in his breast.

For Daphnis shall now be the butt of the million,
And India shall laugh through her myriad throats,
When she harks to the tale of a chota civilian
Who dared to impound his Commissioner's goats.

(b) *THE SILVER BOWL.*

[The scene is laid in the house recently tenanted by Battus, a civilian now under transfer, and his wife Cytherea : an auction is taking place and there is the usual crowd of spectators, among whom are Gorgo and Praxinoe ; the latter is a middle-aged woman, the former little more than a girl ; both are dressed as fashionably as is possible at 9 a.m. in the tropics.]

GORGO.

WHAT, you, my dear ? I thought you never
went
To auction sales.

PRAXINOE.

Well, no, I never meant
To come, but something forced me here, despite
My fixed resolve, constrained me to the site
Of former joys ; you see I used to know
This Battus rather well a while ago.

GORGO.

Yes, so I've heard.

PRAXINOE.

At every rout and reel
Time was when Battus followed close to heel ;
My *vade mecum* and my all in all,
With me he'd boston, bunny-hug and crawl,
Willing at any hour to change his kit
If I, his queen, proclaimed it didn't fit,
Sporting glad socks of emerald, sapphire, rose,
To match the colour of his lady's hose.

GORGO (*naively*).

But did your husband like his wife to play
With such a lad ?

PRAXINOE.

Why ! 'tis the Eastern way,
And only he, whose wife is unattached,
Shall cavil at the Fate that sees him snatched
From dance to dance, when some bright chummery
gem
Might take his place as husband (sub pro tem),
Some slim-shanked youngster of the Tango crew
Who'd bring him rest and respite from his rue.

So while he sat and doubled Royal spades,
We sought the shadows of Gymkhana glades,
And tripped light-hearted through the fields of fun
Twain souls that grew indissolubly one.

GORGO.

How nice it sounds ! But what about his wife,
This Cytherea ? Was it endless strife,
The while you sought to thwart her bold design ?

PRAXINOE.

And why, prithee, when each and every sign
Showed 'twas a marriage of convenience ?
The bride had influence and I'd the sense
To see this wedding brought him into touch
With Simla, secretaryships and such.
Thwart her, forsooth ! Why, on the wedding day
Twas I, Praxinoe, who chose to play
The leading part, who smiled a gracious smile
What time I kissed her in the palm-girt aisle,
Who soothed her fears, who calmed her trembling
limbs,
And hid my heart-ache, whilst I chose the hymns.

GORGO.

What altruism !

PRAXINOE.

And, Oh ! the presents, dear !
Toast-racks and butter-dishes, tier on tier,
Inkstands and paper-knives, a thermos flask—
All that a bride could reasonably ask ;
But only one was there to bring him joy,
The silver bowl I gave my Battus boy :
A carven bowl, whereon the chased design
Told such another tragedy as mine.

GORGO (*interested*).

Was it a picture of a queen and king
Seated throne-high, while grovelling courtiers bring
Their suppliant gifts and maiden dancers writhe
In strange contortions, barbarous and lithe ?

PRAXINOE (*surprised*).

Yes, Gorgo, yes ! but tell me, how on earth—

GORGO (*ignoring the interruption*).

While he their lord regardless of the mirth
The drill'd devotion of the rank and file,
The smug complaisance in his lady's smile,
Stares, as who sees beyond the palace wall
Some dreamland vision dearer than them all,
Listens intent, as one who hears above
The discord of the drums the voice of Love ?

PRAXINOE.

Yes, that's the bowl ! but how and when and where
Came you to see it ?

GORGO (*suppressing a smile*).

Oh, it's over there,
Among the crockery, the glass and plate ;
(consulting her catalogue)
Cruet E.P. ; one bedstead, Lawson-Tait,
One tantalus—Ah ! Look, Praxinoe !
A silver bowl, lot number 93 !

(c) THE PLAINT OF THESTILIS.

CICALA courts cicala ; through the leaves
Chameleons whisper to their vis-a-vis
And every morn I hear beneath the eaves
A hymn of wedlock in a myna key
Ah ! Mother of Love ! Bring back my man to me !

Once 't was a subaltern I hoped to wed,
Cupid in khaki, Love's facsimile,
Who carried "Thestilis" tattooed in red
Upon his arm for all the world to see.
Ah ! Mother of Love ! Bring back my man to me !

And then a victim to the brown and blue,
I tracked the footsteps of a D. S. P.
Who held me rapt with tales of derring-do,
Who gave me silk and silver filigree.
Ah ! Mother of Love ! Bring back my man to me !

Sad is my lot, yet still the memory smiles
To think of him—that wan and pale D. C.,
Who crept bewildered through a world of files,
Yet once found time to take me on his knee.

Ah! Mother of Love! Bring back my man to me!

For five long years I've fought through thick and thin,

And next July I shall be twenty-three,

So be he padre or a son of sin,

A man of parts or partial pedigree,

Ah! Mother of Love! Bring back some man to me!

A NIGHT-MARE DURBAR.

[An official endeavouring to obtain from Simla some information on Durbar dress was informed by wire : “Trousers are not to be worn at Delhi.”].

THROUGHOUT the day they echo in my head
And through the night from sunset to reveille
These nightmare orders haunt my sleepless bed—
Trousers must not be worn at Delhi.

I strive to solve the riddle, but in vain,
As they who sought the whereabouts of Kelly,
The meaning slips elusive through my brain—
Trousers must not be worn at Delhi.

And as the ribald, shameless message fled
From Cutch to Bude, from Quetta to Clovelly,
The British Empire turned a deeper red—
Trousers must not be worn at Delhi.

I see a row of lean official shanks,
Dyspeptic colonels trembling like a jelly,
Panjandra shivering in Jaeger ranks—
Trousers must not be worn at Delhi.

Heads of Departments pass with foreheads pent,
And blushing “pine for that which is not” (Shelley),
Or (like Achilles) skulk within a tent—
Trousers must not be worn at Delhi.

And grief is writ upon my consort’s brow,
Hinc illae lacrimae!—It’s hard on Nelly,
She’d been invited, bought her kit, and now—
Trousers must not be worn at Delhi.

THE OLYMPIANS

[A Hill-Station Impression.]

O H ! count me happy, I have scaled the heights
The yawning Yomas and the nestling knolls
Which guard the dwellings of those sacred wights,
That careless coterie of super-souls,
Who lead a life of true Olympian ease
Four thousand feet or so above the seas.

Fit home for deities, this cool retreat,
This halcyon haunt, this blend of West and East,
Where Maréchal Niel and dahlia compete
With orchidaceæ in the floral feast,
And winds, divinely reminiscent, blow
O'er English salads still in embryo.

Thrice blest Olympians, I've heard them roar
For *arda* nectars in their heavenly club,
I've shot a card on Jupiter, nay more,
I've doubled Vulcan in an awesome rub,
Reckless as one who calls a truce to care,
Replete with memories of sterling * fare.

And though to-morrow I must needs re-seek
The lowly home of mortals, and repine
In ash and sack-cloth for a weary week
'Mid jungle meals and dilatory kine ;
The woes of travel and the thoughts that tire,
To-night I hurl them to yon crackling fire.

And as in days of prehistoric yore,
The blest Prometheus from Olympus came,
Rejoicing mightily as one who bore
The stolen secret from a godly flame,
So, too, from these Olympians I steal
The warning memory of a fire-side meal.

* With apologies to my host, C. G. Stirling, Esq., Superintendent Southern Shan States.

BURMA RESEARCH.

[A letter addressed to the "Burma Research Society" has been returned to the sender by the Rangoon Dead Letter office.]

WE have sought till we're weary of seeking,
We have found till we're sick of our finds,
Till our brain-pans are swollen and reeking
With matter for erudite minds ;
By the gleam of collegiate tapers
We have sat on our literate perch
And read you in various papers
The records of Burma Research.

Deserting Society's highways
For the haunts of the lizard and bat,
We scrambled through feverish by-ways
On the chance of securing a nat ;

Did we murmur for whiskies and sodas,
For the joy of a feminine smile
As we rummaged 'mid kyaungs and pagodas
On the quest of a hti or a tile ?

Immune from the trammels of Fashion
And freed from her pestilent yoke,
We pondered polygamy's passion
And the lore of a primitive folk ;
The disciples of light, the apostles
Of learning, how gladly we'd muse
On the "when" of a fetich or fossils,
On the "why" of a Chinaman's trews.

And we thought that the fame of our labours
Was rapidly spreading abroad,
That we'd gained the respect of our neighbours
By the facts that were ours to record,
That the fruits of our cerebral slickness
Were themes for a world to discuss,—
When we found (to our infinite sickness)
That others were searching for us !

THE SPARE-ROOM GHOST

THERE are countless types of fairies,
From the merman of the deep
To that nobler wraith whose lair is
In some castellated keep ;
But the nat whose pranks and patter
Ought to fascinate you most
Is that roguish little satyr
Whom they call the spare-room ghost.

There are sprites that sorely harass
With their ecstasies of pain,
Gurgling grief behind the arras,
Making noises with a chain ;
They may scare you like the devil,
But they're always too engross'd
In their miseries to revel
Like the little spare-room ghost.

You may watch it deftly balance
On its wizened little head,
You may feel it through the valance
That is hanging round your bed,
By the ray which softly rambles
From the pillow to the post
You may note the merry gambols
Of the little spare-room ghost.

And I rather think you'll rank it
As the master-ghost in craft
When you feel it filch the blanket
Or impersonate a draught,
When the matutinal tapping
That suggests the tea and toast
Only proves to be the rapping
Of the little spare-room ghost.

'Mid its repertoire it numbers
An infinity of jests
To annihilate the slumbers
Of procrastinating guests,

Of the visitors who linger
 Neath the roof-tree of their host
Till they've seen the warning finger
 Of the little spare-room ghost.

But I think I ought to mention
 That where'er I go and stay,
I'm a martyr to convention,
 (Drawing seven-eight a day),
I'm a model guest, so is it
 Any wonder I can boast
That I've never had a visit
 From the little spare-room ghost ?

LINES TO MR. WILLIAM WILLIAMS.

[“Billy Williams”—a cocktail much sought after by Anglo-Indian women.]

LONG years ago when Lower Burma flowed
A seething cataract of milk and honey,
And strange adventurers from Scotland showed
Their native skill in making piles of money,
Out to the East in fortune’s quest there came
A youth of parts, as yet unknown to fame,
’Twas Mr. William Williams.

Conceive a lad, about whose path there plays
The careless charm of Ranelagh and Brighton,
A subtle soupçon of Brummellian days,
The manner of an admirable Crichton ;
Conceive a figure like a tailor’s plate,
An Oxford lounge which beautified the gait
Of Mr. William Williams.

Now though the province seemed a trifle drear,
He scorned the fashions of the local Crusoe
And put to shame the Keltic pioneer
With quite the most entrancing thing in "trousseaux,"
The butler gasped and called the cook to see
Those silken pants, the braided "robes de nuit"
Of Mr. William Williams.

He'd dreamed of love beneath an Eastern moon,
Of widows out to grass, but here his dream ails,
For in reality he finds Rangoon
Replete with men but destitute of females ;
He joins the Club, but, oh ! his spirit sinks,
For what are shares and Caledonian drinks
To Mr. William Williams ?

Despite the shock, despite the prospect grim,
He showed a courage worthy of a Zeno,
He introduced a cock-tail, made the Gym
A cross between a Pump-room and Casino ;
And keen to quell the dancers' future qualms,
He screened the bar with little tubs of palms,
Did Mr. William Williams.

His lure succeeds ; the wives, who long had ceased
To miss the husbands climate bade them banish,
Now poured in rich profusion to the East
From Glasgow, Dulwich, Bath or Macrahanish ;
No more on Burma need they look askance,
If Burma means a cock-tail and a dance
With Mr. William Williams.

Ah ! Mr. Williams—Billy of that ilk,
Those halcyon days are fled and half forgotten
And—what with Harrogate and Clifton milk—
You deem senility supremely rotten ;
Yet don't ; for still across an Eastern sky,
An you but hark, you'll hear our ladies cry
For Mr. William Williams.

TRIOLETS OF TRAVEL.

I 'VE earned my T. A.
It's a thing to be pleased at !
Twenty miles in a day !
I've earned my T. A.
It's a pound on my pay
And that's not to be sneezed at.
I've earned my T. A.
It's a thing to be pleased at !

* * *

He gets on my nerves
Does the Circuit House menial ;
Where's that pot of preserves ?
He gets on my nerves
And the dâk book observes
That his manners aren't genial.
He gets on my nerves
Does the Circuit House menial.

* * *

The village *thugyi*
He has brought me papayas,
He is seventy-three,
The village *thugyi*,
And his fruit, you'll agree
Is as ancient and dry as
The village *thugyi*,
He has brought me papayas.

* * *

What a beautiful view !
What a lovely pagoda !
(“ Boy ! Whiskies for two.”)
What a beautiful view !
Fifty miles from H.Q.
(“ What ! ! Forgotten the soda ? ”)
What a beautiful view !
What a lovely pagoda !

* * *

I am nobody much,
But I own a chuprassi.
Bands, badges and such—
I am nobody much,

But he lends me a touch
Undeniably classy ;
I am nobody much,
But I own a chuprassi.

* * *

Here's my travelling bill !
Why ! They've cut it to shredlets !
My mileage is nil !
Here's my travelling bill ;
Oh ! it makes me quite ill,
And I've run out of Seidlitz !
Here's my travelling bill ;
Why ! they've cut it to shredlets !

A DREAM OF FAIR LADIES

(a) *DEA EX MACHINA.*

WE'd to ransack the hedges and by-ways
To make up a four for a rub,
Folk avoided Society's highways,
And nobody came to the club,
Save a batch of recluses who made it a rule
To give up their evenings to pool.

Our Civilians abode in their breaches—
A region of sessions or cess,
Wives clung to their husbands like leeches,
And subalterns clove to the mess.
Through the whole of the Empire from Hobart to Hull
There was never a station so dull.

Our women remained in their houses,
Immune from Lotharian shocks,
Knitting waistcoats or ties for their spouses,
Or infinitesimal socks.
Their manners and morals, their habits and all
Were suggestive of Exeter Hall.

Then She burst on our boredom and sadness
With the swish of delectable frills,
With the fragrance of love and the gladness
That blooms on the frivolous hills ;
At the critical moment she came on the scene,
A Goddess from out a machine.

And our men who knew naught but the goose-step
And things regimentally slow,
She taught them to waltz and to two-step,
To point an immaculate toe ;
From the Colonel right down to the junior sub,
She constrained them to come to the club.

And those evenings I once used to funk (Ah !
How dreary the vista ! how drab !)
Are devoted to "Kicking the punkah,"
"Up Jenkins" or "Animal grab,"
And we're getting quite good at "Shikaring the shoe,"
Now that Snookers are strictly taboo.

And I'd like her to know that I thank her
From the depth of an amorous heart,
For destroying propriety's canker
Which was keeping the sexes apart,
For enticing our wives from the conjugal spell,
And our celibates out of their shell.

(b) THE IRRAWADDY CHATELAINE.

SHE is rarer, she is fairer
Than her sister in the plain,
And with none can you compare her
For comparison is vain,
And you know it when you've seen her
In an ecstasy of frills,
'Mid a setting that is greener
Than the greenest of the hills :
Thus shall poet never give her
Quite the tribute that he ought,
Mine hostess of the river,
My lady of the ghât.

Dan Cupid takes his pleasure
Ashore and eke afloat,
But he finds no store of leisure
On an Irrawaddy boat,

For his little heart starts throbbing
When he sees her on the strand,
When the engines cease their sobbing
And the lascars swim to land ;
See him groping in his quiver
See him pluck the bow-string taut,
Mine hostess of the river,
My lady of the ghât.

'Tis a dream of one who graces
With her sweet and winning way
Half a dozen bright oases
As you pass to Mandalay ;
In a land of girls and geckos
Flowering trees or chattering mart,
'Tis an English voice that echoes
In a poetaster's heart.
Glad the life and glad the liver,
If his pilgrimage is fraught
Of sunlight on the river,
Of laughter on the ghât !

When my last great tour is ended,
When I've drawn my final wage,
Should I see her white and splendid
Waiting on an Orcan stage,
Though I feared the ghostly rabble
And an atmosphere that rang
With the nauseating babble
Of a Stygian serang,
I would quell the craven shiver
And my cares would seem as nought
Mine hostess of the river,
My lady of the ghât.

(c) *JANE.*

IN the throes of a season, when peace is
Disturbed by Society's flow,
And our haunts are invaded by nieces
 Agog and aglow,
When life is a revel, a riot
Of orgies that addle the brain,
There is peace and ineffable quiet
 With Jane.

Her ways—they are tender and smiling,
Her words—they are kindly and wise,
Love lingers half-hidden, beguiling
 In the depths of her eyes ;
As the chequer of sunlight that dances
For joy in a Devonshire lane,
So sudden, so bright are the glances
 Of Jane.

When the heart of an exile is broken
And he yearns for the things of the West,
She speaks, and her words are a token
 Of infinite rest ;
She smiles, and the night-mares begotten
Of anguish, the spectres of pain
Are banished awhile and forgotten,
 With Jane.

I heed not the cut of her bodice,
The tricks of her mortal disguise,
Such things were profane, when a goddess
 Comes down from the skies.

She is womanly, winsome and pretty,
But were she unspeakably plain,
She would still be my lady of pity,
 St. Jane.

And just as some fate-stricken peasant,
In the hour when his miseries cease,
Goes up to the shrine with a present
 For the giver of peace,
I slip off my cares with my sandals
And creep to my favourite fane,
Where I burn me devotional candles
 To Jane.

(d) *MISTRESS KATE.*

YOU stand in the glare of the footlights now,
 You have won in the fight with Fate,
Worried through to the long-wished goal ;
But the iron has entered your inmost soul,
 Can't you feel it, Mistress Kate ?

Or ever your husband made his mark
And love grew out of date,
When the pair of you strove on a lower grade,
Your ways were the ways of an English maid,
 You remember, Mistress Kate ?

But a thaw set in on the distant hills
And fortune ran in spate,
And you laughed as you watched the torrent play,
For how should you know that it swept away
 The best of you, Mistress Kate ?

Had you kept your head when you took your seat
In the mansions of the great,
In a word, had you lived as a woman should,
You might have done us a world of good,
But you haven't, Mistress Kate.

For the old ideals were soon forgot
In the joy of your new estate,
And you lost the truths that you once revered,
Or ever the fire of pride had seared
The heart of you, Mistress Kate.

And many a woman has lived to feel
The venom of your hate,
For it only needed a word from you,
A whispered hint and the scandal grew
Till it broke her, Mistress Kate.

And when on your last great round of calls
You stand at Heaven's gate,
And the wondering angels hear you claim
Your right to pass—in a husband's name,
God help you, Mistress Kate !

ON AN INDIAN BEACH.

I LOSE the scents of jungle and of shrine,
The dank close fragrance of a hothouse land,
And breathe once more the sea-weed and the brine
Blown fresh and heartening over English sand.

Quit of the glare, the greenness and the gold
The peacock pageants of a folk at play,
I see a reef that rises grim and cold
From out a cloud of reminiscent spray.

And I forget my loneliness among
A world of alien thought, of alien speech,
To hear the waves repeat the mother-tongue
They learned to murmur on an English beach.

WHEN PINTO CAME TO MARTABAN.

THEY kissed the cross upon their dirks,
Fit emblem of the piety,
And called on Christ to bless their works
From *Aava* to *Tanassary* ;
Did conscience smite before a shrine,
“ For God and King.” The murmur ran
Like thunder down the bearded line,
When Pinto came to Martaban.

Seven hundred *Portugals*, they smiled
To see the first fruits of their toil,
A frightened queen, a wondering child,
The carts that creaked beneath the spoil ;

The sunlight kissed each brave cuirass,
It shone o'er helm and *partesan*,
On *arquebus* and *courtelas*
When Pinto came to Martaban.

They lined the hot and dusty strand,
Glad hearts, who knew the path they trod
Meant three-score thousand ducats and—
The greater glory of their God :
They'd dared the wrath of cloudless skies,
They'd worked the guns, they'd held the van,
And who should rob them of their prize,
When Pinto came to Martaban ?

They chained their prisoners 'gainst the tide,
They mocked their struggles from the bank,
They heaved across the *lauler* side
The sacks that fought before they sank ;
The pagan prayer, the choking breath,
Could these prevail, could these unman
Those splendid souls who played with death
When Pinto came to Martaban ?

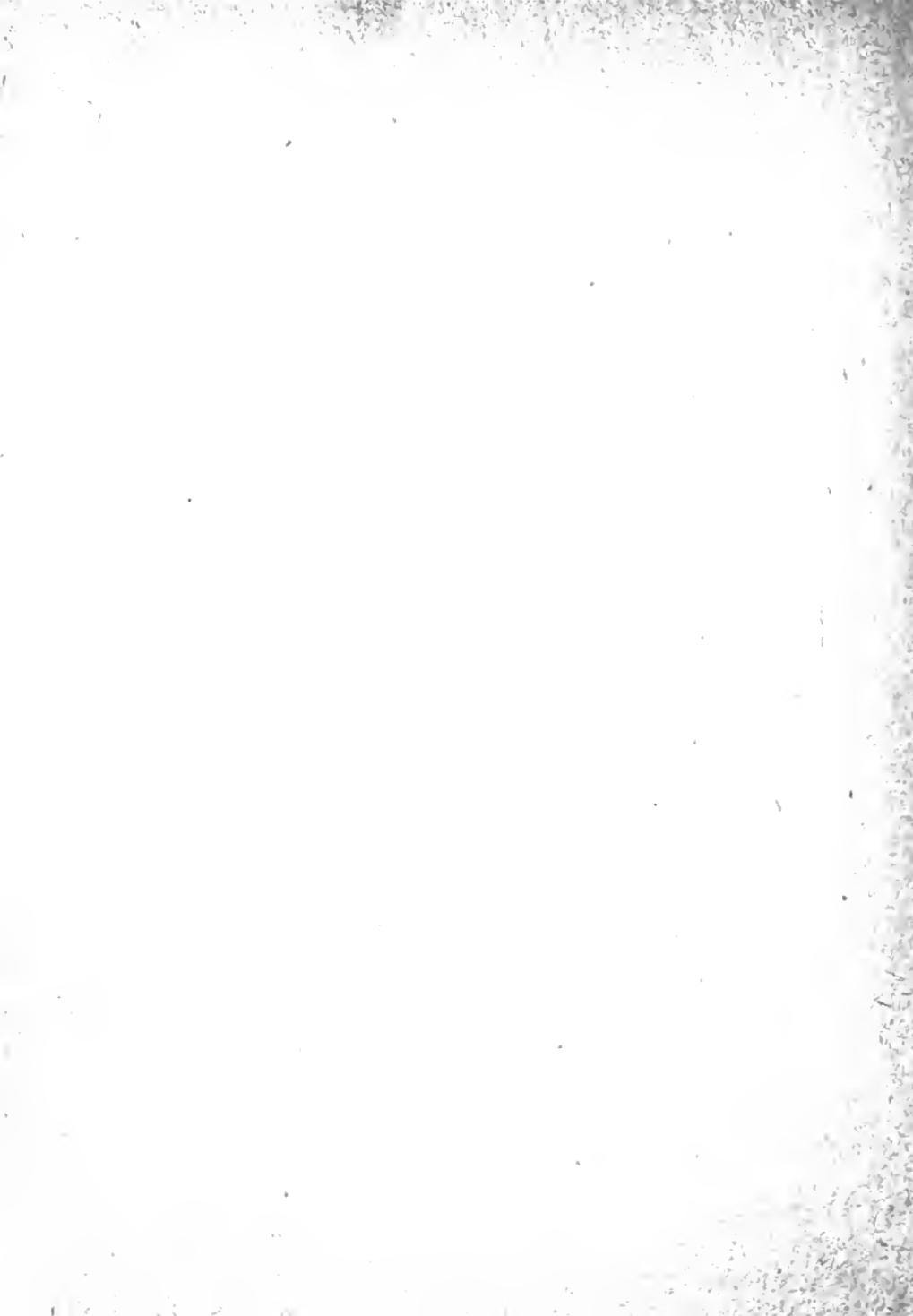
The sea to-day has fled her shore
And left behind a greener plain,
Where once the crazy *galliots* bore
Their *camphire*, spice and *pourcelain*,
As though the sea would wish untold
The tales of strife that first began
In those mad reckless days of old,
When Pinto came to Martaban.

PAGAN.

[From Nyoung-u.]

UP from the hamlet on a river bank
There floats the echo of a festal song,
A shout of laughter or a dream of bells,
And through the withered palms and evening wind
Breathes soft a mimic melody of surge.
Here is the Burma that we know and love,
The green and gold of drifting twilight skies,
The magic hills which sunset swiftly melts
From brown to blue, from blue to lilac haze,
The fading sandscape and a barge which stems
A gentler current 'neath the darkening cliffs ;
Here is a scene that wins the watcher's heart
And rises to his lips ; but who shall tell
The wordless glory of those time-worn shrines

And russet domes which taper to the skies
From out the green of half forgotten paves,
An ancient memory, an old-world dream
Wise in the wisdom of the centuries,
Which pass and passing leave their haunt more fair,
Their silent ways more eloquent of peace ?



LINER LYRICS

I.

THE CAPTAIN.

A HERO, built of stalwart stuff
Beneath the gilt and braid,
At times immoderately bluff,
At times supremely staid,
A martinet who 's feared by all
Who serve him on the seas,
He lets the little children crawl
About his spacious knees.

At meals, blue-garbed, he never quails,
Although he knows by rote
The hyper-nauseating tales
That Anglo-Indians quote ;
Though bored with all we have to say,
He never tries to stem
Our talk of precedence or pay,
Of leave or *sub pro tem.*

The flying fish, the sharks and dhows
We sight with eager zest
No longer have the power to rouse
Emotions in his breast ;
Porpoise and phosphorus shall cloy
And never a view shall please
Till winches creak again for joy
At sight of homeland quays.

His brow reflects the storms of years,
His eyes the nights of watch,
His speech may grate on Southern ears
That are not schooled to Scotch ;
Relic of days when hearts were stout
And 'prentices were keen,
He holds depressing views about
The Mercantile Marine.

He seeks not wealth, for stock and share
Must seem the merest dross
To one who knows exactly where
To find the Southern Cross ;

Our card-room gains, the daily stakes
 We hold upon the run,
What *can* they mean to one who takes
 His bearings by the sun ?

No worldly wisdom mars his mind,
 No passions rend his heart,
Trained in a school of wave and wind
 He lives aloof, apart ;
A Celt, prepared at need to fend
 For ship or faith or clan,
Whom close acquaintance proves a friend
 And tragedy a man.

II.

THE CHIEF STEWARD.

A WEARY of service in drab inns,
In restaurants dingy and drear,
You left it, comptroller of cabins,
For a wider and happier sphere,
For a nobler and ampler position
Where a kindlier destiny smirks
Through a vista of tip and commission
And (a purser's prerogative) "perks."

Five years have I spent in the jungle
In a joyless and primitive nook,
Where life was a strenuous bungle,
Which was chiefly the fault of the cook ;
Mid my punkahs and purdahs and dhurries,
For a lustre I've yearned to be free
From the thraldom of chilli and curries,
From the bondage of garlic and ghee.

Then you burst on my jaded horizon
With a menu that hinted relief
From the beef that was tougher than bison,
From the fowls that were worse than the beef;
You came, and your genius banished
The woes that my exile had willed,
And the chagrin of chutney has vanished
In the joy of a mackerel (grilled).

Small wonder you're proud of your duty,
Of your rank and that palace of rime
Where lie, like the Somnolent Beauty,
Ignoring the ravage of time,
Lamb, partridges, pheasants and gammon,
And dainties of every type,
From the nobler, like oysters and salmon,
To the lowlier—haggis and tripe.

And because of the grouse and the graylings
You hale from these Boreal vaults,
I forgive you your obvious failings,
I am blind to your manifold faults;
The pantry may hate you, yon diner
May gird at the itch of your palms,
But myself—oh ! mine host of the liner,
I give you a hundred salaams !

III.

THE GRASS WIDOW

YOU lie at ease in a long deck-chair,
As a woman may who has never a care
And never a thought to rankle,
With happiness writ from head to heels
And a linen kirtle that oft reveals
A delicate hint of ankle.

And every day 'tis a gladsome sight
To watch you sit on the captain's right
Nibbling the various victuals,
Or to follow the line of that sinuous neck
As you bend your head on the lower deck
Learning the laws of skittles.

Shall the dream of a husband left behind
Spoil your appetite, cloud your mind,
When the power to charm and coax 'll
Ensure you sympathy (staunch and male)
Whether you lean on a crowded rail
Or stroll on a lonelier fo'c'sle ?

In your thirst for knowledge I 've seen you stand
With a puzzled look and a dainty hand
Pointing to gulls and gannets,
Asking the name of rock or ridge
Wheedling a man from his auction bridge
To a homily on the planets.

To every sailor you 're passing dear,
Be he captain, mate or engineer,
Or merely a bathroom steward ;
For you've learned the terms of the fore and aft,
Picked up phrases—abeam, abaft—
And the hang of a word like " leeward."

There may be hermits (whose lives are cast
In a sterner mould) to deem you fast,
There may be women to flout you ;
But take it as gospel truth from me,
A month on the main would tend to be
Unthinkably dull without you.

IV.

THE QUARTER-MASTER

TATTOOED and tanned, you reek of tar
And suck an ancient pipe ;
All scarred and gnarled and seamed, you are
The proper pirate type ;
And whensoe'er you come on deck
The children love to linger
And scan the dragons on your neck,
The amputated finger.

You should have been a buccaneer,
A man of ribald mirth,
A hint of gold about your ear,
Of pistols at your girth,
Marooned 'mid isles of shale and shells,
Where time is told by notches—
But, as it is, you strike the bells
And keep a deal of watches.

Maybe you think that life is stale,
That modern times are dull,
That privateers no longer sail
Beneath the bones and skull,
That nowadays no smugglers brag
Of beaches nice and handy,
Whereon a crew may run their swag
Of dutiable brandy.

But you are wrong, my friend ; you take
A pessimistic view ;
For still ferocious blackguards slake
Their thirst for derring-do ;
Braver than once, your smuggler rows
His kegs o'er sunlit reaches,
While pirates have the cheek to pose
On panoramic beaches.

Then why should Fortune clip the wings
Of one whose instinct soars
Above the world of trivial things
His pirate soul abhors ?
Nay, Quarter-master, snap your thumb
At one who mocks you, dupe her,
Give up the Service and become
A bioscopic "super."

V.

THE SURGEON.

[“Should the need arise, it is the duty of the surgeon to stand by the passengers.”—*Liner Regulations*.]

FRESH from the wards of Bart's or Guy's,
A uniform that matched your eyes
And azure socks on,
You look absurdly young to be
M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.,
And M.B. (Oxon).

And we who ailed from *mal-de-mer*
Would strive to strike a jaunty air
And smile defiance
On one who searched with youthful zest
For any ill on which to test
His new-learn'd science.

So, while your log-book scarcely named
Our paltry woes, another claimed
 A larger section,
A damsels, slightly overstrung,
Whose malady was either lung
 Or heart affection.

Maybe the ailment was not such
As might have brought you into touch
 With fame ; perchance it
Was not the sort of case that needs
A page or so in doctors' screeds,
 E.g. *The Lancet*.

Yet every day—a trumpet press'd
About the purlieus of her chest—
 Would find you gleaning
The secret of a maid's decline
And give a phrase like “99”
 A deeper meaning.

And, since you found among the crew
No case of sleeping sickness, sprue,
 Or plague (bubonic),

You had the livelong day to twist
Your fingers round a throbbing wrist
Or give her tonic.

And, as I watch the eager face
With which you choose a pillow's place,
A rug's position,
Or hear amid my doze the sound
Of whisper'd talk, I know she's found
The right physician.

There may be passengers who hate
Your jocund ways, and roundly rate
Your berth-side manner,
Who call it flirting and deride
The hours you dally at her side,
The way you fan her ;

But things are seldom what they seem,
And I am quite prepared to deem,
The motive higher ;
A sailor first—your ocean school
Demands obedience to a rule—
You're "standing by" her.

VI.

THE CHIEF ENGINEER.

HERE 'mid infernal depths of black and red,
Where, like lost souls, the lascars dimly loom,
With pomp and circumstance you daily treaddel,
The middle platform of the engine-room.

And yet it is not this your stately walk,
Your engines innocent of spot or speck,
That makes your name the universal talk
Of all who gossip on the upper deck.

“*Ignotum omne*”—and we frankly own
We know but little of the toilsome craft
Which keeps you busy in that torrid zone
Of thrust and damper, throttle-valve and shaft.

Yet 'tis not ignorance that makes you great,
 No, nor that moment when a god appears
From his machine, when bells are striking eight,
 To cry the knottage in our eager ears ;

But in a little cabin eight by six,
 Where pumps and cylinders no longer claim
Your grim attention, and you 're free to mix
 Your favourite drink, to play your favourite game :

'Tis here you show the genius that fools
 Those poker-sequences we fondly find,
The bland exterior that rakes the pools
 Nor hints the working of a master-mind.

Down in those noisy depths it may be true
 That there are other valiants who know
As well the tricks and turns of crank and screw,
 The strange vagaries of a dynamo.

It matters not—for us it is enough
 That here, where drinks are long and words are
brief,
In all the ways of calm suave-featured bluff
 You stand alone, pre-eminently “ chief.”

An
Y
Th

FURLough VERSES



I.

THE COLONEL.

[The origin of “Bogie” appears to be shrouded in mystery ; the following verses are an attempt to solve the problem by one who believes that he met the prototype in the flesh.]

HE had recently come from the tropics,
From a land of shikaris and Sikhs,
But instead of the usual topics
 He dilated on mashies and cleeks ;
Red-visaged and spare, you ’ll depict him,
 A warrior pensioned and tame,
Brogue-shod and be-knickered—a victim
 Of the “royal and antient game.”

No bunker would cause him a flutter,
His approaches were rhythmic and clean,
But he wasn’t so sure with his putter
 And he always took two on the green ;

Though he lacked the resource of a SAYERS,
Though his tee-shots were straighter than long,
The doyen of average players,
He couldn't do anything wrong.

Now it may have been owing to magic
Or a touch of an Indian sun,
But a game becomes terribly tragic
When you know where the globule will run,
When you know that no fluke can diminish,
No foozle can ever inflate,
A score that adds up at the finish
Precisely to seventy-eight.

And this habit of *eadem semper*
This freedom from stymie or swerve,
Is apt to react on the temper,
On an elderly gentleman's nerve ;
And he grew so excessively boresome
Concerning his curious play
That we never suggested a foursome
Till the Colonel was out of the way.

But a truce to his fads and his failings,
Let his idiosyncrasies be,
For he lies t'other side of the palings
Which run by the seventeenth tee,
In a churchyard where visions of gladness,
Those dreams of confetti and rice,
Are dimmed by a shadow of sadness—
(You tee "number two" if you slice).

And oft in the hush of the gloaming,
When the greens are denuded of flags,
When the caddies are wearily homing
And the lockers are crowded with bags,
There's a sound as of somebody driving,
Of a weird and unnatural "Fore,"
'Tis the wraith of a Colonel that's striving
To put up a different score.

II.

THE CHEMIST'S DREAM.

THREE stars shone out with a baleful glare,
Scarlet and green and blue,
And a medley of perfumes smote the air,
Lavender, musk, and rue.

And the chemist shook, for a nameless fright
Harried his evening walk,
And his face grew pale in the ghostly light,
Like camphorated chalk.

He was sick to death, he was sore afraid,
For he knew from his sense of smell
That he'd come to the dread phenacetin glade
Where the Hæmogoblins dwell.

Swift and light as the wind-blown shaft
They crowded the path he trod,
With a shriek of joy and a ghoulish laugh,
That cracked like a senna pod.

He heard the patter of elfin shoes,
As he fled in that breathless sprint,
And he felt the grip of a deft-flung noose
Of salicylic lint.

They have trussed him tight with boric gauze
To a eucalyptus tree,
With a loofah gag betwixt his jaws,
And a bandage round his knee.

Cold ran his blood as a toilet cream,
And the sweat like a perfume spray,
When he saw the glycero-phosphates gleam
And the trail of powders grey.

And he thought with grief of the life he'd led,
Of his homœopathic pills,
Of the times he had stolen a doctor's bread
Prescribing for coughs and chills ;

Of the poor little babes who tossed and turned
In their eagerness to toothe,
Diminutive mites who yowled and yearned
For syrups that really soothe.

And he groaned as he thought of the stout and spare
Who 'd sampled his make-shift stuff,
Of the bald old colonels who hoped for hair
On the strength of a printed puff.

Then away to covert the goblins race,
But the chief of the pygmy band
Draws near with a smile on his wizened face
And a nightlight in his hand.

The fuse is fired, the flamelets start
On their journey of spark and smoke—
When just at the really crucial part
The chemist suddenly woke.

III.

AUNTS ANCIENT AND MODERN.

WHERE are the aunts of yester-year,
Whose quaint familiar faces
Redeemed an age of chandelier,
 Of lavender and laces :
Their daily *rôle* to knit and chat
 On ottoman or settle,
Their properties a pampered cat,
 A caddy and a kettle ?

Where are the aunts of yester-year,
Whose charitable labours,
Whose coal and flannel made them dear
 To impecunious neighbours :
Who breathed an air of auld lang syne
 And struck delicious poses
That went with elderberry wine
 And desiccated roses ?

Where are the aunts of yester-year,
The bane of little nephews
Who feared the ebon crutch, the queer
Appendage that the deaf use ;
Small visitors who viewed askance
Their autocratic habits
And quailed before the lorgnette glance
Like paralytic rabbits ?

Here where the groundsmen mow and delve
Till every lie is grassy,
You'll find the aunt of 1912
Most handy with her brassy ;
Scorning the after-luncheon nap,
The mittened "*far niente*,"
She strives to bring her handicap
To something under twenty.

Here where the glittering snowscapes shelve
And feathery flakes are swirling,
You'll meet the aunt of 1912
Tobogganning and curling ;

Ski-ing and skating with the best
In manner bright and hearty,
She adds inimitable zest
To any Alpine party.

Queen of the tourney, she applauds
Each feat of thew and tendon,
Heroic bouts at Queen's or Lord's,
At Ranelagh or Hendon ;
Where airmen plane, where batsmen plant
Their feet across the creases,
Young England greets the modern aunt
And disregards the nieces.

IV.

THE INTRUDER.

WHEN Cohen came, the county sought
To entertain and fête
The multi-millionaire who'd bought
The Goodleigh-Gore estate ;
By steed and car, by rod and gun,
He proved his native worth,
And Loamshire deemed her new-found son
The happiest man on earth.

But no one guessed the haunting dread
That chilled him to the bone,
When Cohen sought his Stuart bed
Or Cohen dined alone ;
The vengeance of a bygone age
That lurked behind the doors,
The ghostly threats, the sullen rage
Of ancient Goodleigh-Gores.

And none but Cohen heard the jeers
That echoed in the hall,
And only he could feel the sneers
That hung on every wall,
Where ruffled lord and wimpled dame
Convulsed him with a stare,
Or (worse) conversed from frame to frame,
As though he wasn't there.

About the hall gaunt shapes of steel
Told tales of long ago,
Grim yarns of death that made him feel
Distressingly *de trop* ;
As men who knew the hideous wrong
He'd wrought their sacred realm,
They gaped derision loud and long
From out each yawning helm.

And Mistress Ellen Goodleigh-Gore,
Who patronised the Keep,
And for five hundred years or more
Had spoiled her kinsmen's sleep,

Plucked trembling at her snood and cried :
“ Alack and wellaway !
Tis would that I had never died
To see so sad a day.”

A POSTER IDYLL.

THOUGH the morn be drear and soaking,
 She smiles on me and you,
 When the 9.15 from Woking
 Arrives at Waterloo ;
 She stands in a glade of flower and fern
 (That is ours for five and three)
 And tells of love and a cheap return
 To Baydon-by-the-Sea.

All white from shoon to bodice,
 She hangs, divinely tall,
 A Rivieran goddess
 Suspended from the wall ;
 'Mid the station smells you can almost sniff
 The tang of a Baydon breeze,
 As you gaze on the gulls and a crumbling cliff
 And the bluest thing in seas.

And every night I toast her
As I quaff the brimming bowl,
This girl who fills my poster-
Impressionable soul,
This holiday-lass who softly smiles
On passengers and guards,
And wafts them in fantasy miles and miles
From sooty station yards.

{

But I've sampled the quaint aroma
Of the "Wachuwant" cheroot,
I have scanned the gay diploma
They send with the Korn-cure boot,
And I've always found that the scent or soap
You buy at a hoarding's call,
Is never the same as you dared to hope
From the picture on the wall.

And that is why, dear maiden,
I've passed a firm decree
That I'll never go to Baydon,
To Baydon-by-the-Sea ;

I 've lost my trust in a hundred pills,
In a pen and a score of shoes ;
But the faith I 've pinned to those girlish frills
Is a faith that I would not lose !

VI.

CINEMATICS.

'TWAS a nightmare ; to begin, it
Was a scene of rival crews,
Rowing seventy strokes a minute
In the battle of the Blues ;
Then they took us (*allegretto*)
To a carnival in Spain
Through the squalor of the Ghetto
To a vineyard in Lorraine.

Geysers, selvas, tundras, gorges,
Passed before us as we sat ;
Next, a scene of Bacchic orgies
In a paralytic flat,
With the tenants all a-reeling
Through the windows or the walls,
And a catastrophic ceiling
That inevitably falls.

Tulip, hyacinth and crocus
 Bloomed in clumps of quivering sheen ;
Steeds oblivious of focus
 Galloped wildly off the screen :
Was it these or "Peeps of Norway,"
 Taken far, oh ! *far* too quick,
That constrained me to the doorway
 Feeling imminently sick ?

There 's a twinge about my liver,
 There 's a grinding in my head,
As I clutch the rugs and shiver
 With a bottle in my bed,
While the doctor comes to sound me
 With an animated smile
And the bedroom swirls around me
 In the bioscopic style.

I have suffered from neuritis
 And the sicknesses of note,
Such as "flu," appendicitis,
 And a diphtheritic throat,

But of all the ills that plague you
With their bitterness and gall
'Tis the cinematicague
That's the vilest of them all.

VII.

TO FLORENCE (Personal)

WHEN parents make the home abode
A somewhat perilous address,
Your modern maiden learns to code
Her raptures in the daily press ;
'Tis thus I scan the inner needs,
The cravings of a certain "Floss,"
Whose poignant cry this morning reads :—
"TwlvFrdybkstllChrngX."

Florence, if I may thus appeal
To one so gentle and refined,
Whose weekly cryptograms reveal
A sweet simplicity of mind,
Whose artless rhapsodies in print
Atone for much my paper lacks,
Whose puzzles, once deciphered, hint
The tragedy that dogs your tracks—

I 've burned a deal of midnight oil
Decoding all your hopes and fears,
The daily round of calm and coil,
Your griefs and jests, your smiles and tears,
And having grasped each mental turn,
Each varying mood, each wayward whim,
I find there's nothing more to learn,
Excepting what you find in him.

Week in, week out, I 've watched you try
To fire this Rupert—thing of clay ;
Week in, week out, his trite reply
Has riled me more than I can say ;
See Monday last—the harsh refrain
Suggests a rift within the lute :—
“ Swthrtwmstntmtgn,
Bptntdr.” (The callous brute !)

Oh ! Florence, shun the sordid type
That woos like this. It drinks and bets,
I doubt me not ; it scorns a pipe
And smokes eternal cigarettes.
A myriad maids, unnumbered dames,
Have lived to rue the fatal waltz
That linked their hearts to one whose name 's
Th' epitome of all that 's false.

And, should it chance, as I surmise,
That Rupert finds he cannot come,
You mustn't dim those pretty eyes,
You mustn't twirl an anxious thumb ;
Nay, child, rejoice in what you 've miss'd.
You stand to gain through Rupert's loss,
For I intend to keep that tryst,
TwlvFrdybksllChrngX.

VIII.

THE BAUM-RABBIT.

A LULLABY.

[“ Baum-Rabbit : a phantom rabbit which haunts the Manchester cloughs.”—*Dialect Dictionary*.]

O H, hush thee, my child ! in the twilight
The bedroom looks eerie and queer,
And I know from that shape on the sky-light
That the little baum-rabbit is near ;
As a rule she 's in hiding till midnight,
But to-day she is early astir,
The little baum-rabbit who hunts for her habit,
Her trim little habit of fur.

She lurks in the daytime in garrets,
In darksome and desolate ways,
And dreams of the turnips and carrots
She nibbled in happier days,

Or ever he caught her and skinned her,
That soul-less and dissolute rough,
And that little baum-rabbit developed the habit
Of haunting a Manchester clough.

At night 'tis her custom to wander
Through factories silent and vast
To patter through work-rooms and ponder
O'er tippets that tell of a past,
And when, 'mid her labours, the morning
Breaks grey on a vista of furs,
With a queer little stab it comes home to the rabbit
That none of these relics are hers.

She grinds her diminutive molars
As she searches in vain for her pelt,
On a mountain of skeleton bowlers
Or a pile of Mancestrian felt,
Till a watchman comes soft round the corner,
Gives chase to a shadow and falls
In his effort to grab it—this little baum-rabbit
That glides through the factory walls.

But to-night 'tis the gladdest of creatures
That squats on the nursery tiles,
'Tis a rodent, whose raw little features
Are lit by the sweetest of smiles,
Who knows that her troubles are over,
That her ghostly manœuvres may cease,
For the little baum-rabbit discovers her habit
Adorning my baby's pélisse.

MR. JENKINS.

I LIKE to think of him as one who spent
 His manhood in an atmosphere of schism,
 Flouting the grim proprieties that went
 To make the period of the prune and prism,
 Who for conventions did not care a lira,
 And frankly loathed the Mid-Victorian era.

'Twas in the days of crinoline and (worse)
 Of crude embroidery and cruder painting ;
 When England's youth betook itself to verse
 And maids were periodically fainting,
 That Mr. Jenkins timed an apt arrival
 To preach his famous drawing-room revival.

He did not waltz, he did not care for whist,
 For pressing ferns or poker ing a panel,
 And, fresh from Paris, naturally miss'd
 The *joie de vivre* in vogue across the Channel,
 So, as became his Continental schooling,
 He taught mankind a livelier mode of fooling.

He took a table, set the players round,
Piped "hands below," that so the nimble shilling
Might pass unseen, a part the ladies found
A trifle bold, yet infinitely thrilling ;
Each seeks the coin and, while the fingers fidget,
Our Mr. J. doth squeeze Clarissa's digit.

The game caught on : "Up Jenkins" was the cry
In hall and cot, in vicarage and tavern ;
Extreme Dissenters tried it on the sly,
And every smuggler played it in his cavern ;
And thus it was that Jenkins earned his laurels
As one who'd ruined Mid-Victorian morals.

* * * *

He's dead and gone, yet, when the rafters reel
With shouts that bid the palm-locked line untether,
We (she and I) are horrified to feel
A ghostly grip that holds our hands together—
A fact observed by none, save me and Mabel—
'Tis Mr. Jenkins underneath the table !

X

THE CRWTH.

[Crwth: a kind of violin with six strings, formerly much used in Wales—*Dictionary*.]

WHEN Scottish warriors scale the carp
To plaintive pipes, and Erin's ywth
Still proudly point to Tara's harp,
How is it, Wales, you spurn that crwth?

Your Principality may boast
A leek-embazoned flag, but, 'strwth,
My gallant friend, you're but the ghost
Of what you'd be beneath a crwth.

With Cymric zeal, with Druid touch
Your bards still go it nail and twth,
And yet the instrument they clutch
Is simply nothing to a crwth.

Guitars shall tell of Carmen's grace,
Semitic harps shall breathe of R^wth,
Then why, my Wales, must Gwyneth face
The love-less silence of the crwth ?

That native ire your Sagas show—
Compare the tale of Gelert's slwth—
Had disappeared long years ago,
If you had tuned this magic crwth.

And Mr. George, Carnarvon's joy,
Might well have lost his ways uncwth,
Had he but learned, when still a boy,
To calm his passions on a crwth.

THE SPRING TROUT.

NOW that wintry clouds have lifted
 To the joy of waiting herds,
 And the March-scene has been shifted
 'Mid an orchestra of birds,
 You may see me through the rushes
 Lying "doggo" on the brink,
 Popping up to scare the thrushes,
 Which are coming down to drink.

Though it's not for me to boast, I'm
 Like no other fish I know,
 For I find the yearly close-time
 Most unconscionably slow,
 While my brethren hold it treason
 For the which I ought to die,
 Just because I greet the Season
 With a twinkle in my eye.

Though my parents hint of foemen
And the tricks that they devise—
How they tickle your abdomen,
How they tempt you with their flies ;
Though the sadness of the platter
Dims the gladness of the pool,
Do the perils really matter
If I 'm free to play the fool ?

Should I see the portly Vicar
Silhouetted on the stream,
Oh ! my scales begin to flicker
And my eyes begin to gleam,
For he 'll track my merry gambols,
Never dreaming that he 's mine
Till I 've lured him to the brambles,
Till I 've heard him foul his line.

But when summer brings an outlet
To the raptures of the burn,
And the fancy of the troutlet
Takes a sentimental turn,

Though the cast should ne'er deceive me,
Though the splash should damp my zeal,
Love may land me, love may leave me
In the Vicar's daughter's creel !

THE ROSERY.

“ ‘T IS roses, roses all the way,’
A-climbing to the leads,
Or blooming lovelier ’mid the clay
Of half a score of beds ;
Standard and dwarf, they rise to view
For all the world to gorge
Upon a feast of scent and hue—
The handiwork of George.

He used to be a restful type,
A youth of cultured brow,
Who liked his after-breakfast pipe,
His morning screed—but now
He leaves the hurried meal to seize
A syringe and a pail,
To wage a war on aphides,
On anthracnose and scale.

He kens the name of every rose,
The lingo of his craft,
The latest thing in hoe or hose,
The proper time to graft ;
And when the morn is young and fresh
He rises with the thrush
To water Madame Pauvert (flesh)
And Mrs. Sandford (blush).

There was a day when he and I
Were seldom seen apart,
But time has rent the ancient tie
And others claim his heart,
While I can never really feel
I like his present set—
This Ulrich Brunner, Maréchal Niel
And Marie Henriette.

I deprecate this garden zest,
My heart profusely bleeds
For one who bids the weary guest
Assist him with the weeds,

Who after dinner sits and dreams
 Of cankers and their cures,
Or talks for hours on cheerless themes
 Like chemical manures.

What though the blooms he loves to raise
 Bewitch the folk who call ?
What though admiring neighbours gaze
 Across the garden wall ?
To one this rosery shall bring
 Profound regrets, shall be
Anathema, the cursed thing
 That came 'twixt George and me.

GLOSSARY.

Arda Half.
Asti bát karō .	. Talk quietly.
Bearer Butler's assistant
Cess A fund raised by taxation.
Chota Small.
Chummery .	. A house tenanted by a party of bachelors.
Chuprassi .	. Native attendant.
Circuit-house .	. A more elaborate species of dák-bungalow or rest-house.
Commissioner .	. Government officer in supreme charge of a division.
Courtelas .	. Cutlas.
D.C. . .	. Deputy Commissioner.
Dhurries .	. Druggets.
D.S.P. . .	. District Superintendent of Police.
Durwan .	. Native watchman.
Galliots .	. Sailing vessels.
Ghât Steps, etc., down to a river.
Gymkhana .	. Club for men and women. } Gym . . .
Heaven-born .	. Epithet applied to Indian Civilians.

Hti	.	.	Lit : umbrella, part of a pagoda.
H.Q.	.	.	Head-quarters.
Idhar ao	.	.	Come here.
Jaldi jao	.	.	Go quickly.
Khansama	.	.	Butler.
Kyaung	.	.	Buddhist monastery.
Lascar	.	.	Native sailor.
Lauler	.	.	Small boat.
Martaban	.	.	A village in Lower Burma — once a famous town.
Mileage	.	.	A journey of over twenty miles.
Myna	.	.	An Indian bird.
Nat	.	.	Burmese ghost.
Papayas	.	.	Indian fruit.
Partesan	.	.	Small cane.
Pinto	.	.	Ferdinand Mendez Pinto, Portuguese merchant-adventurer of the 16th Century.
Purdahs	.	.	Curtains.
Serang	.	.	Native in charge of a gang of lascars.
Seven-eight	.	.	Seven rupees, eight annas : daily allowance to an official when on tour.
Syce	.	.	Groom.
T.A.	.	.	Travelling allowance.
Thugyi	.	.	Headman of a village.
Yoma	.	.	Range of hills.

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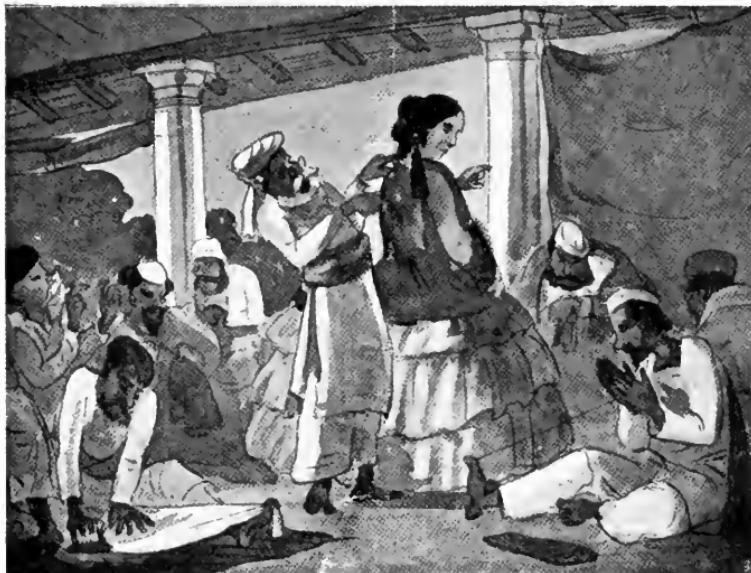
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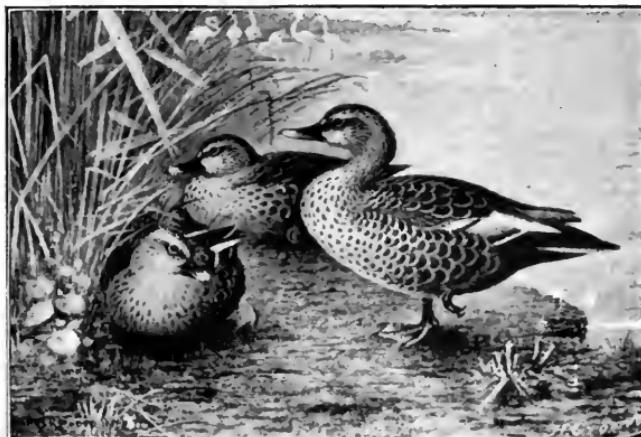


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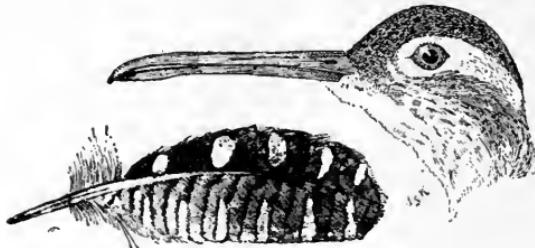
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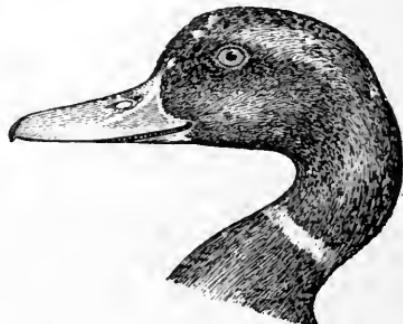
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